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**TAKE A VACATION IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD**

*Governor Schweitzer Chooses National Tourism Week to  
Encourage Montanans to Get Out and Explore Their Home State*

(HELENA) -- Travelers from around the USA and all over the globe travel to Montana each year to enjoy their vacations. With all of our state's world-class natural beauty, outdoor recreation, western history, cultural hotspots and myriad destinations, it is no wonder tourism has become one of Montana's most important economic drivers.

Nevertheless, many Montanans readily admit to not having scratched the surface in exploring their own Big Sky backyard. In the spirit of National Tourism Week - that runs from May 12<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> - Governor Brian Schweitzer issued a challenge to all Montanans to get out and experience a new corner of Montana this coming year.

"We know how fortunate we are to call Montana our home. Make a point this summer to travel our scenic highways, visit our historic and cultural attractions, fish or camp at one of our many state parks and experience our famous Montana hospitality for yourself," said Governor Schweitzer.

"In Montana, true adventure is just a car ride away," said Montana Department of Commerce Director Anthony Preite. "Jump in your car and explore. It won't be long before you realize why we call Montana the Treasure State."

With the escalating cost of gasoline and related travel expenses, this is the year you should plan a vacation a little closer to home. With the bounty of top-tiered and off-the-beaten-path destinations that exist all over Montana, you could spend a lifetime traveling the back roads of our Treasure State. Take a cue from all those national and international visitors; they're onto something big. Montana – Take a vacation in your own backyard.

Here is a list of ten prime Montana destinations for you to put on your travel agenda.

1. **Dinosaur Trail:** Did you know that Montana has yielded some of the world's most significant dino discoveries? Visit all fifteen stops spread across the state on Montana's newly inaugurated Dinosaur Trail and be sure to bring along your new Prehistoric Passport . Prizes are awarded to those that receive stamps from all the facilities.

[www.mtdinotrail.org](http://www.mtdinotrail.org)

2. **Glacier National Park:** Sure, you know Glacier, but did you know that now until July is a prime "secret season" to experience the Park's vast, alpine solitude... before the summer tourism season kicks in? Similarly, post-Labor Day offers another in-the-know window for Montanans to bask in Glacier's abundant elbowroom. [www.nps.gov/glac](http://www.nps.gov/glac)

3. **Miles City Bucking Horse Sale:** Fast approaching, this colorful western event determines "the horse that can't be rode" and "the cowboy that can't be thrown". Celebrating its 57<sup>th</sup> year, this spirited event kicks off on May 18<sup>th</sup> and offers pari-mutuel betting for the first time ever this year. [www.buckinghorsesale.com](http://www.buckinghorsesale.com)

4. **Whitewater Rafting on the Alberton Gorge:** Located just minutes west of Missoula on the Clark Fork River, Alberton Gorge offers fun, moderate whitewater thrills for the whole family. [River Adventure](#)

5. **Anaconda-Pintler Scenic Highway:** Any way you slice it, this is a spectacular alternative to I-90 when traveling between Butte and Montana. Treat yourself to a box of Moose Drool truffles in Philipsburg and enjoy one of Montana's best kept secrets.

[Montana's Scenic Highways](#)

6. **Fort Peck Reservoir:** With a shoreline longer than the entire California Coast, Fort Peck Reservoir is a favorite of anglers seeking trophy walleye or pre-historic paddlefish. For the non-anglers in the family, be sure to check out Montana's own life size "Peck's Rex" at the Fort Peck Interpretive Center. [Fort Peck Lake Reservoir and Recreation Area](#)

7. **Virginia and Nevada City:** Let your inner-outlaw out and take in one of Montana's truest historical treasures. Explore the boardwalks and back streets of this authentically preserved frontier town. Don't miss one of their Living History weekends which are held Memorial Day through Labor Day, all summer long. [www.virginiacitymt.com](http://www.virginiacitymt.com)

8. **Little Bighorn Battlefield:** Visit the site of Montana's most famous battle between Custer's cavalry and Sitting Bull's warriors. Observe a landscape that has little changed from a century ago. [www.nps.gov/libi](http://www.nps.gov/libi)

9. **Mountain Bike on King's Hill:** Mountain bikers seeking a vast network of single track should check out the trails in Lewis Clark National Forest off of King's Hill. From tame, double track spins to white-knuckle descents, there's a ribbon of dirt to suit all.

[Mountain Bike Trails](#)

10. **Beartooth Highway:** Wind your way up this highway to heaven – from Red Lodge to Yellowstone National Park – and immerse yourself in the area’s recreational bounty. If you time it right, you’ll definitely want to take in Cooke City’s annual fish fry, August 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>. [Beartooth Scenic Byway](#)

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